

BQC - 91 – 030

Date: May 28, 1991

To: Personal Care Agencies (in Independent Living Centers and County Agencies) PC 4

From: Larry Tainter, Director  
Bureau of Quality Assurance  
Kevin Piper, Director  
Bureau of Health Care Financing

Subject: Follow-up to BQC Memo 91-002 (January 17, 1991) Regarding Medication Administration

The Bureau of Health Care Financing and the Bureau of Quality Compliance have received several questions relative to medication administration by unlicensed caregivers, subsequent to BQC memo 91-002.

This memo will elaborate on the issue of medication administration as it relates specifically to the provision of personal care services under the Wisconsin Medical Assistance Program's (WMAF) Personal Care benefit.

BQC memo 91-002 specifically excluded the personal care worker from selecting the dose or selecting a medication. BQC memo 91-002 expanded the definition "assistance with self-administration of medication" to include "actually placing the medication" in the competent adult's mouth, after it had been preselected by the nurse, pharmacist or competent informal caregiver. Competent adults are persons 18 years or older who are totally able to self-direct their own medication program.

This means the personal care worker can retrieve the designated or preselected medications as directed by the competent adult and can assist the self-directing competent adult with self administration of oral medications, topical medications to intact skin, sublingual medications, and rectal suppositories only after s/he has been determined competent to assist self administration by the delegating registered nurse. The personal care worker may not participate in the administration of eye medications. Eye medications have many different modes of instillation and are easily contaminated.

There must be RN supervisory support available to all personal care workers. The Board of Nursing, in the March 1990 Regulatory Digest advised registered nurses on the Board's position relative to medication administration by unlicensed personnel. The Regulatory Digest states: Registered nurses should be advised under Chapter 441.11(4) Wis Stats., the practice of professional nursing includes "the supervision of a patient and the supervision and direction of licensed practical nurses and less skilled assistants." Therefore, it is the responsibility of the registered nurse to supervise unlicensed personnel who are administering medication to patients.

If a personal care provider contracts for RN supervision, the supervising nurse must meet the requirements of the Nurse Practice Act relative to supervision and direction of delegated acts. N6-03(3) states:

- (3) SUPERVISION AND DIRECTION OF DELEGATED NURSING ACTS. In the supervision and direction of delegated nursing acts an R.N. shall:
  - (a) Delegate tasks commensurate with educational preparation and demonstrated abilities of the person supervised;

- (b) Provide direction and assistance to those supervised;
- (c) Observe and monitor the activities of those supervised; and
- (d) Evaluate the effectiveness of acts performed under supervision.

The WMAP personal care benefit does not include reimbursement for skilled nursing visits and only reimburses for supervisory visits every 30-60 days. The reimbursement process in no way relieves the delegating nurse of his/her obligations under the nurse practice act as defined above.

Personal care providers have asked whether personal care workers can perform wound care. Wound care is not a reimbursable service for personal care workers. Wound care requires skills nursing assessment and intervention and should be referred to agencies that can provide those services.

If you have any additional questions, please call Pat Rizio, BHCF at (608) 266-6801.

LT:KP:bc 7488

cc:

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- WI Coalition for Advocacy
- Service Employees International Union
- WI Counties Assn.
- WI Medical Records Assn. Cons. Committee
- WI Assoc. of Homes and Services for Aging
- Comm. on Aging, Ext. Care Fac./HH (SMS)
- WI Assn. Nursing Homes
- WI Homecare Organization
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